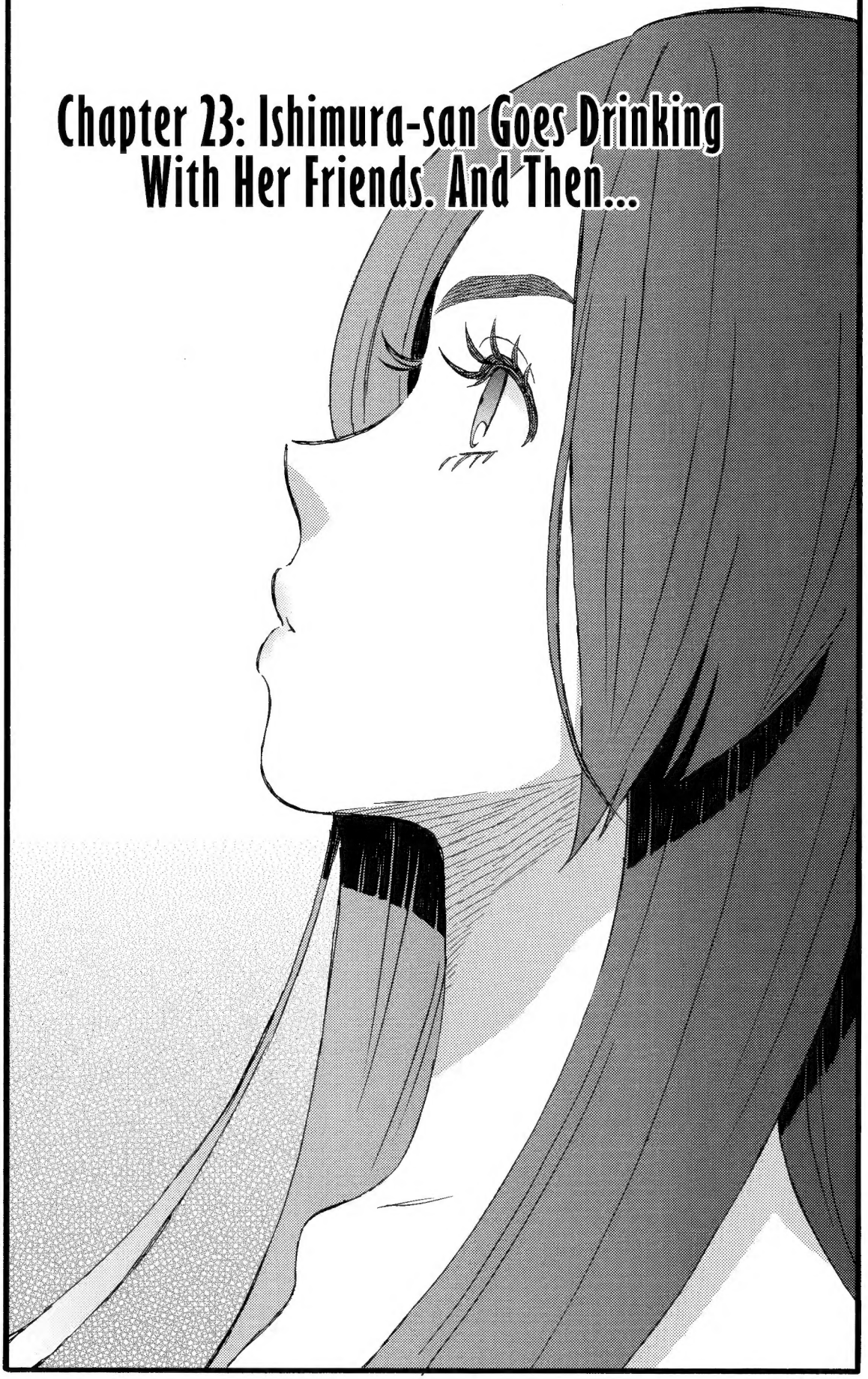
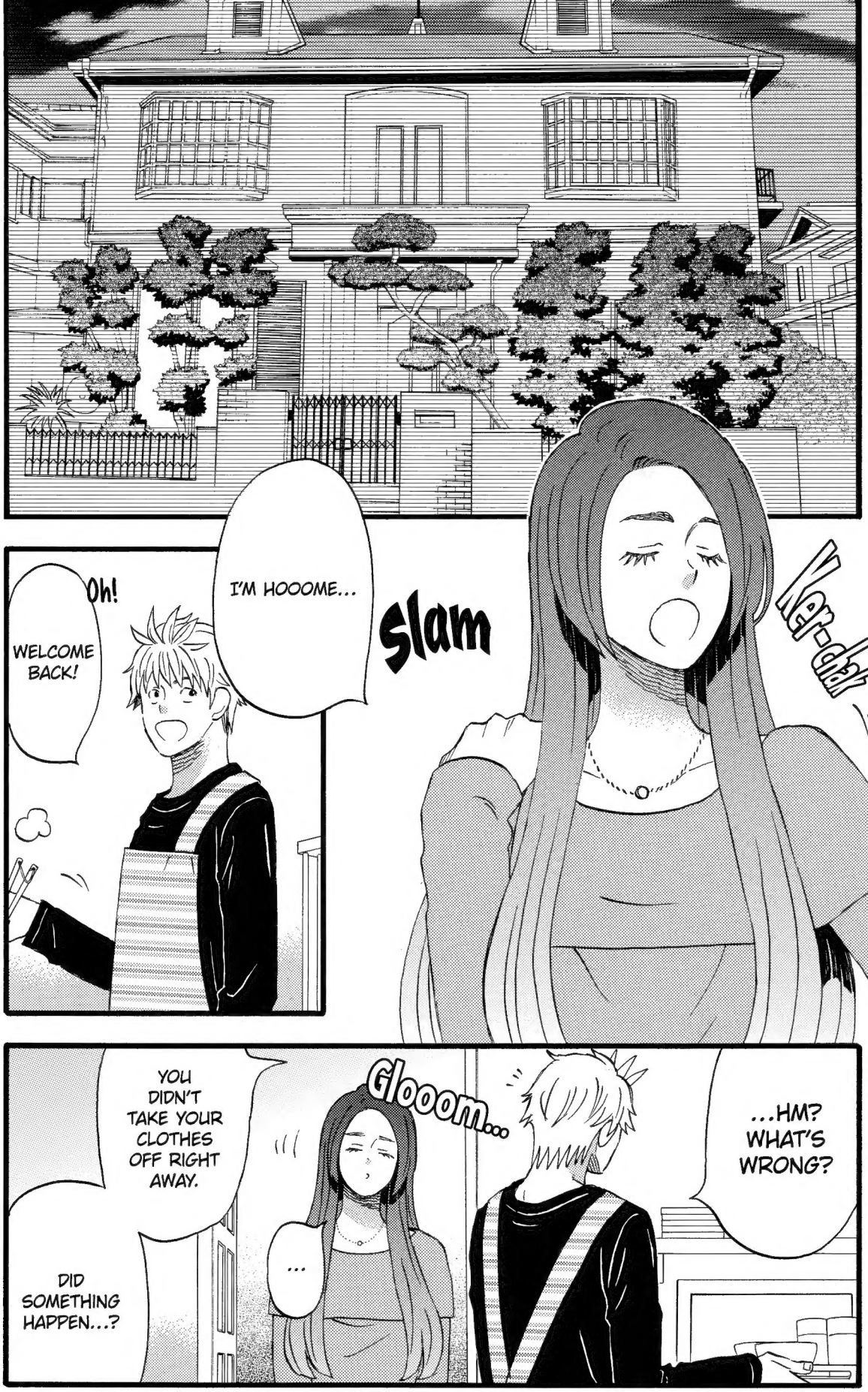
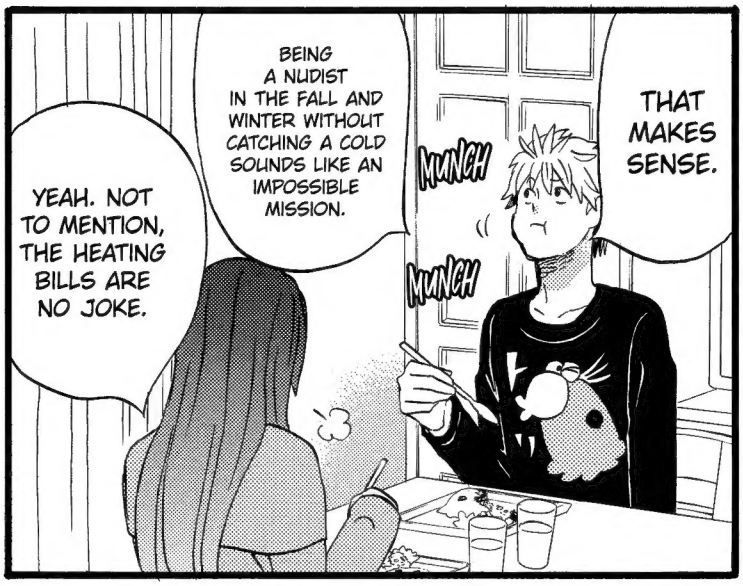
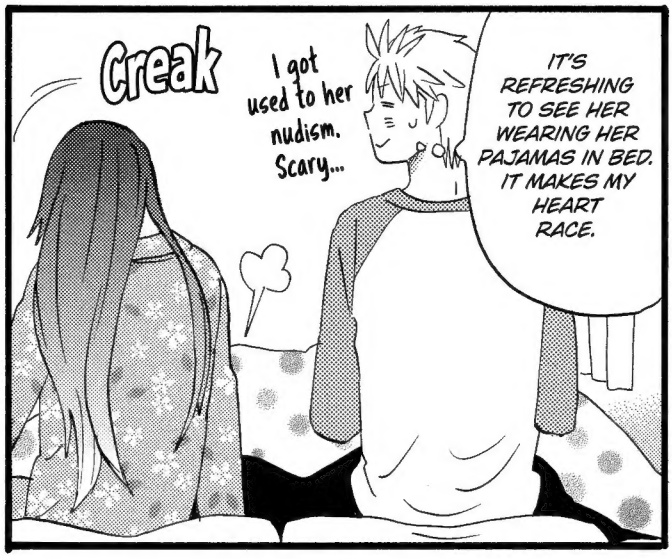
Chapter 23: Ishimura-san Goes Drinking With Her Friends. And Then...



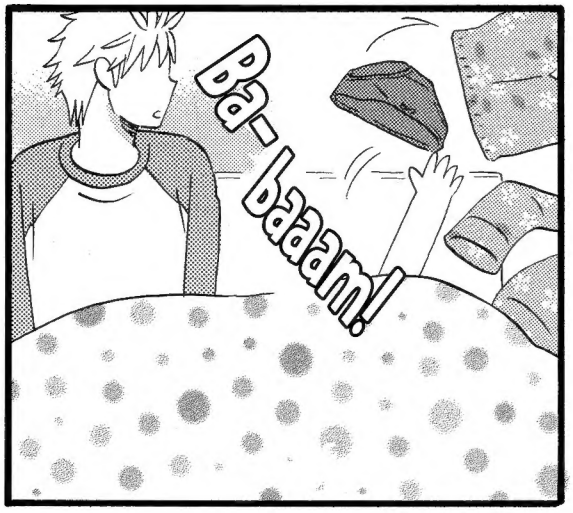

I'M HOOOME...
slam
Ker-chak
Oh!
WELCOME BACK!
Glooom...
YOU DIDN'T TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF RIGHT AWAY.
...HM? WHAT'S WRONG?
...
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN...?

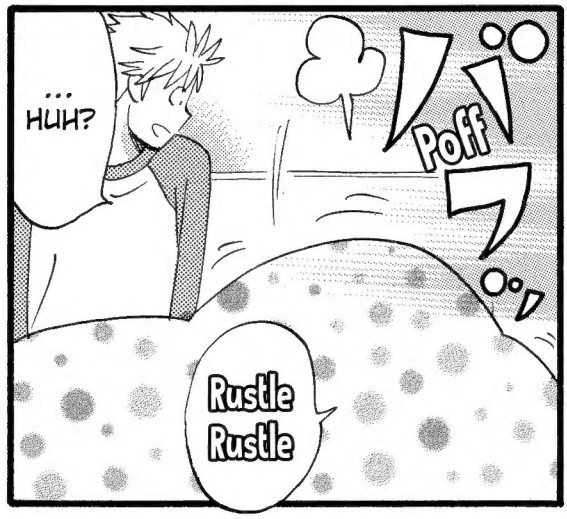

BEING A NUDIST IN THE FALL AND WINTER WITHOUT CATCHING A COLD SOUNDS LIKE AN IMPOSSIBLE MISSION.
YEAH. NOT TO MENTION, THE HEATING BILLS ARE NO JOKE.
MUNCH
MUNCH
THAT MAKES SENSE.

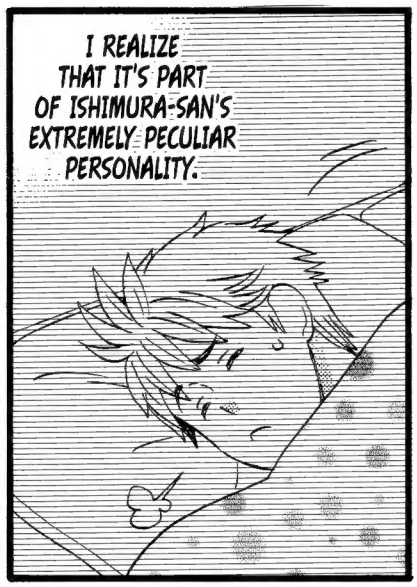
IT'S LATE OCTOBER. IT'S TOO COLD TO BE NAKED.
OHH...

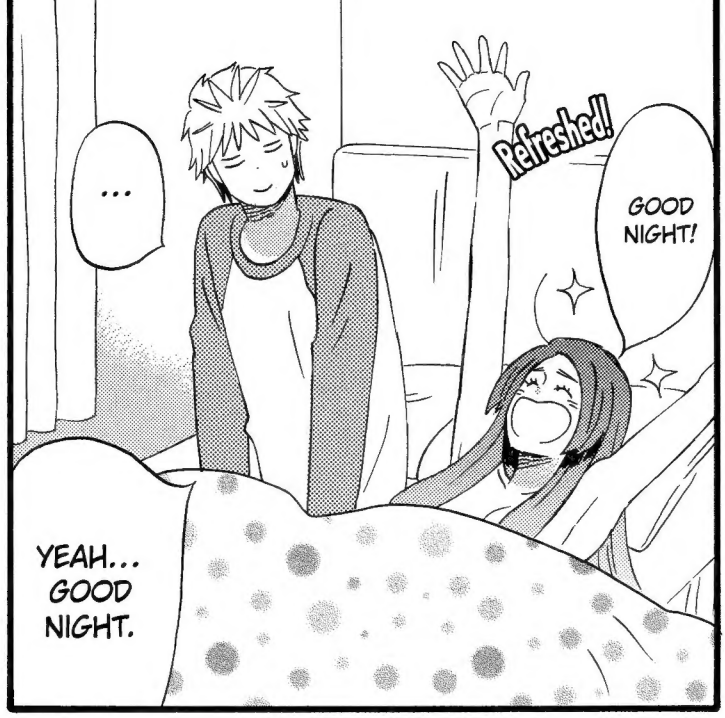

Creak
I got used to her nudism. Scary...
IT'S REFRESHING TO SEE HER WEARING HER PAJAMAS IN BED. IT MAKES MY HEART RACE.

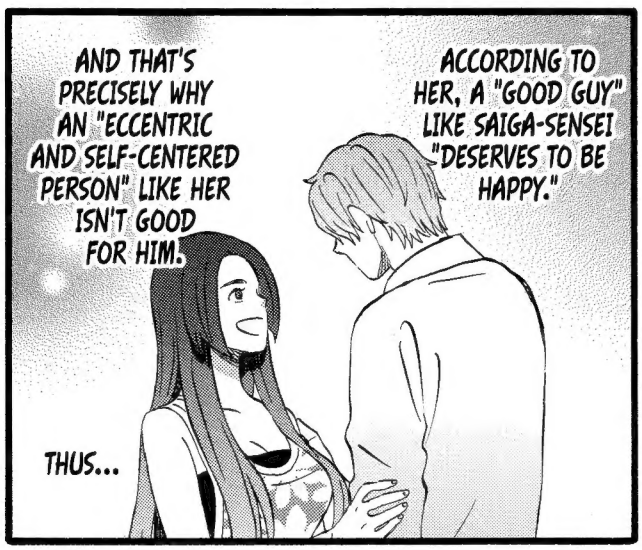
YAAAWN... TIME TO SLEEP...


Ba-baaam!

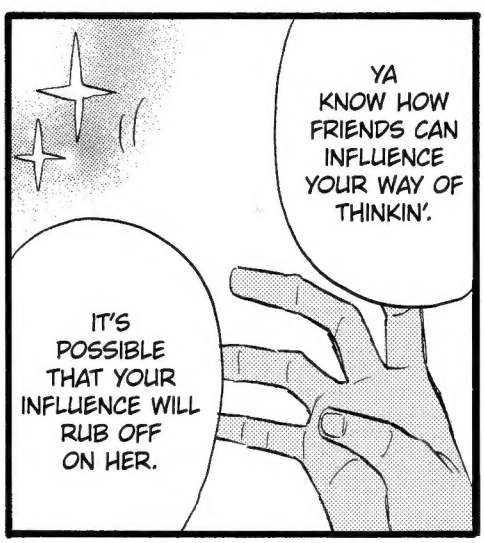

... HUH?
Poff
Rustle Rustle

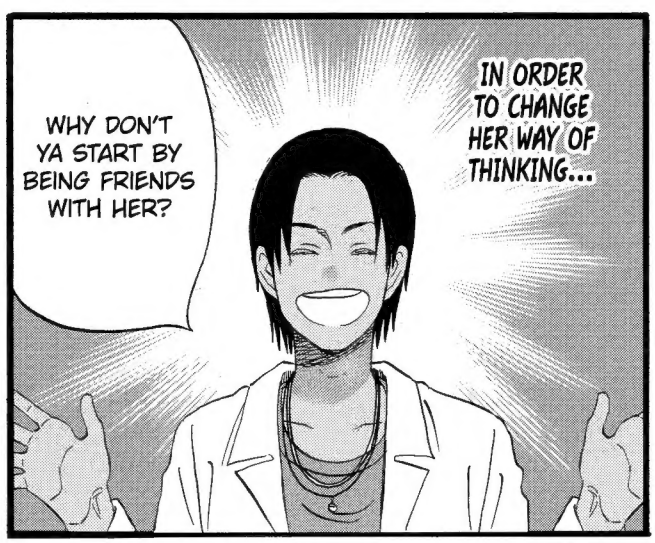

I REALIZE THAT IT'S PART OF ISHIMURA-SAN'S EXTREMELY PECULIAR PERSONALITY.


...
Refreshed!
GOOD NIGHT!
YEAH... GOOD NIGHT.

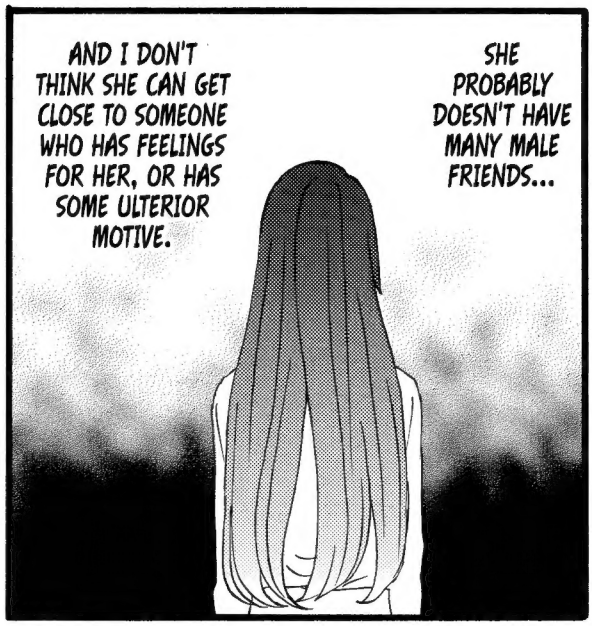

AND THAT'S PRECISELY WHY AN "ECCENTRIC AND SELF-CENTERED PERSON" LIKE HER ISN'T GOOD FOR HIM.
ACCORDING TO HER, A "GOOD GUY" LIKE SAIGA-SENSEI "DESERVES TO BE HAPPY."
THUS...

SHE DOESN'T WANT TO BE IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE SHE HAS FEELINGS FOR...
I'VE KNOWN THIS FOR A WEEK ALREADY.


YA KNOW HOW FRIENDS CAN INFLUENCE YOUR WAY OF THINKIN'.
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT YOUR INFLUENCE WILL RUB OFF ON HER.


WHY DON'T YA START BY BEING FRIENDS WITH HER?
IN ORDER TO CHANGE HER WAY OF THINKING...

...IT'S A LITTLE STRANGE WANTING TO BECOME FRIENDS WHEN WE'RE ALREADY A MARRIED COUPLE. BUT IN ANY CASE...
YA CAN CHANGE HER MIND THAT WAY, KIRISHIMA...!


AND I DON'T THINK SHE CAN GET CLOSE TO SOMEONE WHO HAS FEELINGS FOR HER, OR HAS SOME ULTERIOR MOTIVE.
SHE PROBABLY DOESN'T HAVE MANY MALE FRIENDS...

IN THE FIRST PLACE, WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE IS ISHIMURA-SAN FRIENDS WITH?
HOW CAN WE BECOME FRIENDS...?

HM?
I HAVE THE DAY OFF TOMORROW, SO I'M PLANNING TO GO DRINKING WITH MY FRIENDS.

...OH, RIGHT. KIRISHIMA-KUN...
SHE FINDS DATING DIFFICULT, SO SHE AVOIDS SOCIALIZING WITH PEOPLE OF THE OPPOSITE SEX.
Hmm...

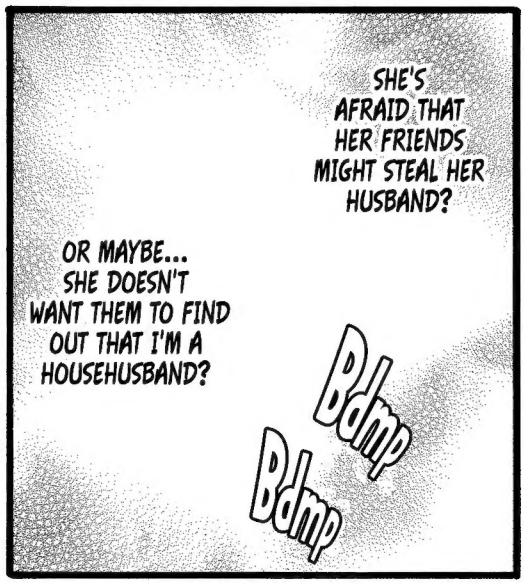
Fwup
RIGHT! THAT'S IT!
WHAT? WHAT IS "IT"?!

...
YOU DON'T NEED TO MAKE DINNER FOR ME.

LEARNING ABOUT WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE ISHIMURA-SAN'S FRIENDS ARE...
MAY HELP ME BECOME HER FRIEND IN THE FUTURE...!
CAN I PLEASE JOIN YOU TOO?!!

ABOUT TOMORROW'S DRINKING PARTY...

...WOW, SHE CLEARLY HATES THE IDEA.


SHE'S AFRAID THAT HER FRIENDS MIGHT STEAL HER HUSBAND?
OR MAYBE... SHE DOESN'T WANT THEM TO FIND OUT THAT I'M A HOUSEHUSBAND?
Bdmp
Bdmp

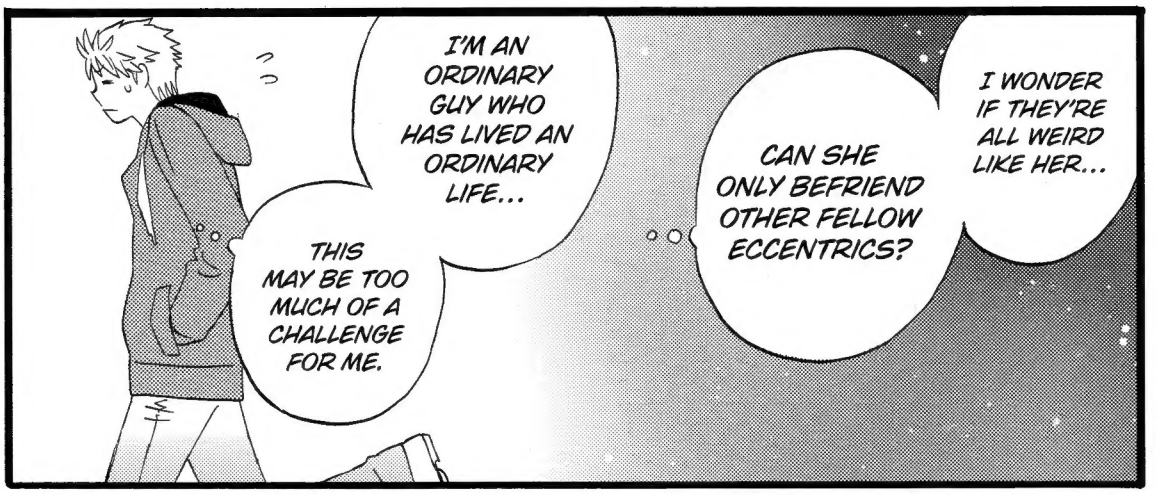
I DON'T REALLY WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THEM...
HUH...?
D-DOES THAT MEAN...
Get up

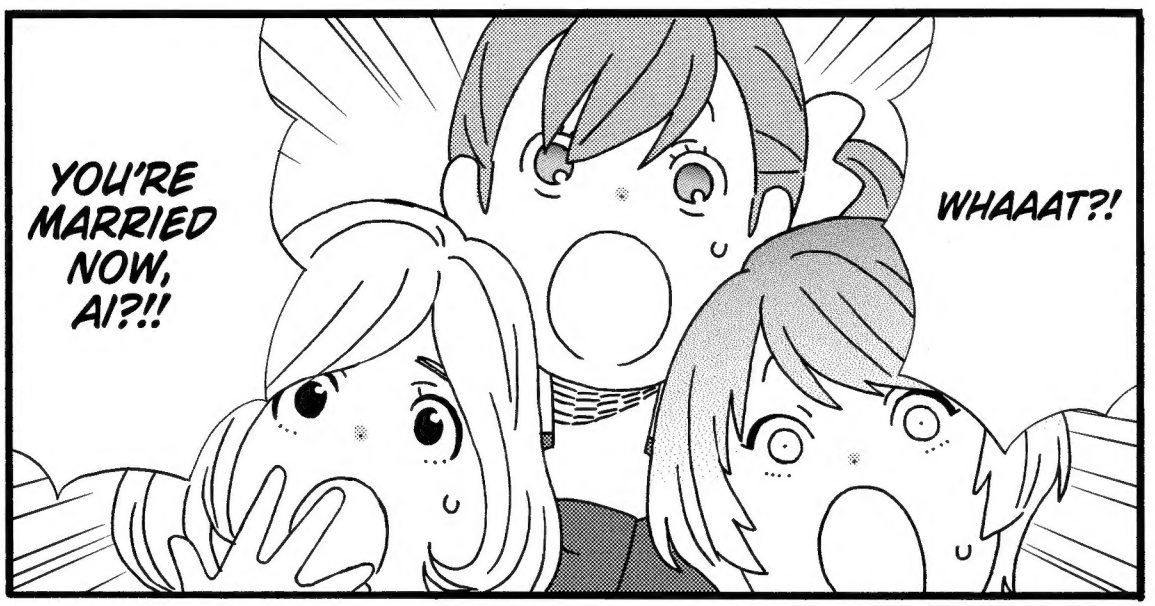
AND SO, KIRISHIMA SHIROU IS JOINING THE GIRLS' PARTY!
Let's gooo!
Yeah, sure...

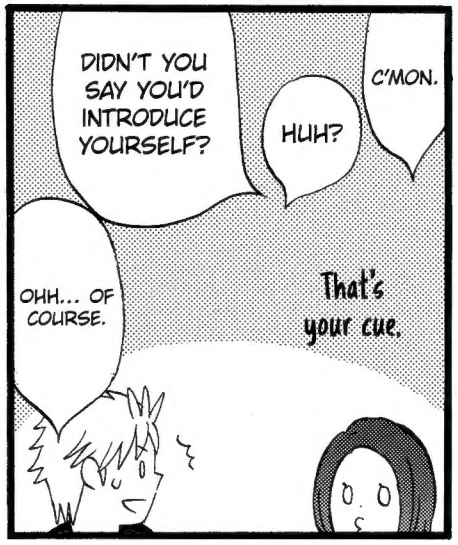
INTRODUCTIONS ARE A PAIN IN THE ASS.
OF COURSE! I CAN INTRODUCE MYSELF TO THEM JUST FINE, NO WORRIES ...!
Ugh...

I WANNA BE A DIVORCÉE!
GIGGLE
GIGGLE
I CAN'T SAY I HAVE A FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF THEM...

STILL, SHE DID TELL ME ABOUT HER FRIENDS BEFORE...
Tmp


I'M AN ORDINARY GUY WHO HAS LIVED AN ORDINARY LIFE...
THIS MAY BE TOO MUCH OF A CHALLENGE FOR ME.
CAN SHE ONLY BEFRIEND OTHER FELLOW ECCENTRICS?
I WONDER IF THEY'RE ALL WEIRD LIKE HER...


YOU'RE MARRIED NOW, AI?!!
WHAAAT?!

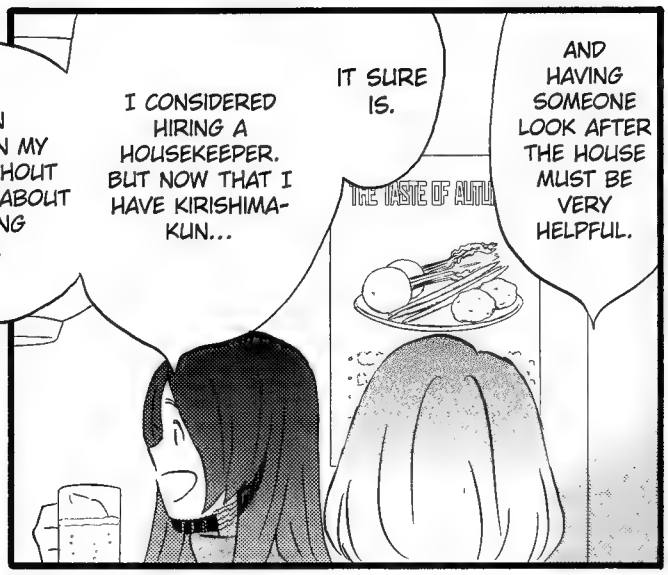

DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU'D INTRODUCE YOURSELF?
HUH?
C'MON.
OHH... OF COURSE.
That's your cue.

OH, YEAH... I FORGOT.
...
Wooow...!
YOU DIDN'T TELL THEM?
When did that happen?!
SAUR2!!!
WHAAAT...?

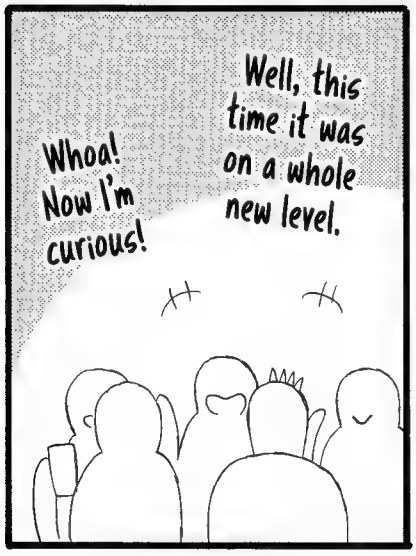
UGHH... DECEIVING THEM OR KEEPING THINGS SECRET WON'T WORK WITH ISHIMURA-SAN AROUND, SO...
SO, WHEN DID YOU GUYS MEET?
How did it happen?
UM...
I'M KIRISHIMA SHIROU. I MARRIED ISHIMURA-SAN A FEW MONTHS AGO.
Nice to meet you!
It's nice to meet you...
TELLING THEM THE TRUTH IS THE BEST OPTION.
WE MET BY CHANCE AT THE BAR I USUALLY GO TO...
I WAS FEELING DOWN AFTER BEING LAID OFF AND DUMPED BY MY GIRLFRIEND, BUT THEN ISHIMURA-SAN SHOWED UP AND BASICALLY RECRUITED ME!
RAAH!!
WHY ARE YOU PUTTING SO MUCH DRAMA IN YOUR INTRODUCTION?
I CAN'T DO IT ANY OTHER WAY!

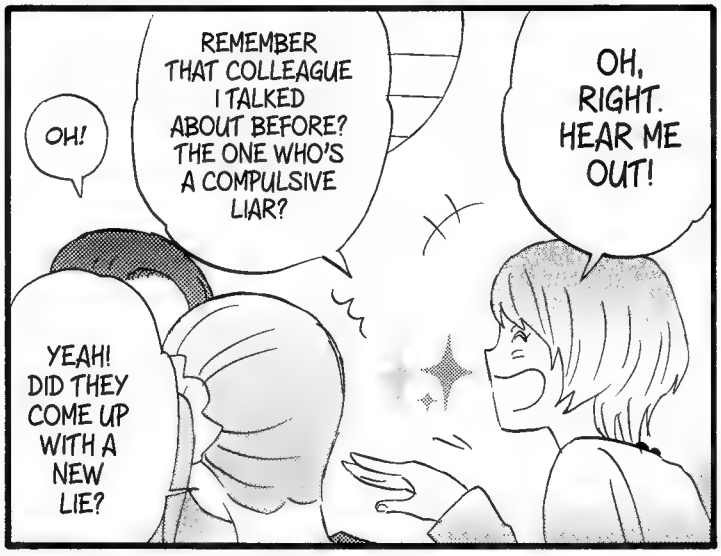
SERIOUSLY?!
Huuuh?
HA HA HA! THAT'S AMAZING!
Whaaat?!
BASICALLY, SHE INVITED ME TO BE HER FULL-TIME HUSBAND.
Um...
YOU WERE "RECRUITED"?
What's that mean?
I WAS PRETTY DRUNK BACK THEN, SO I JUST SIGNED THE MARRIAGE PAPERS WITHOUT THINKING.
BUT I MUST SAY...
STILL, YOU'RE QUITE AMAZING TOO.
Hmm...
I MEAN, THIS IS AI WE'RE TALKING ABOUT...
Yup, yup.
BEING THE BREADWINNER SUITS AI NICELY.
WELL, SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD DEAL TO ME.
SO THERE WAS A TIME WHEN YOU DID REGRET IT, HUH?
GUNT
Ha ha ha!
RIGHT NOW, I HAVE NO REGRETS.

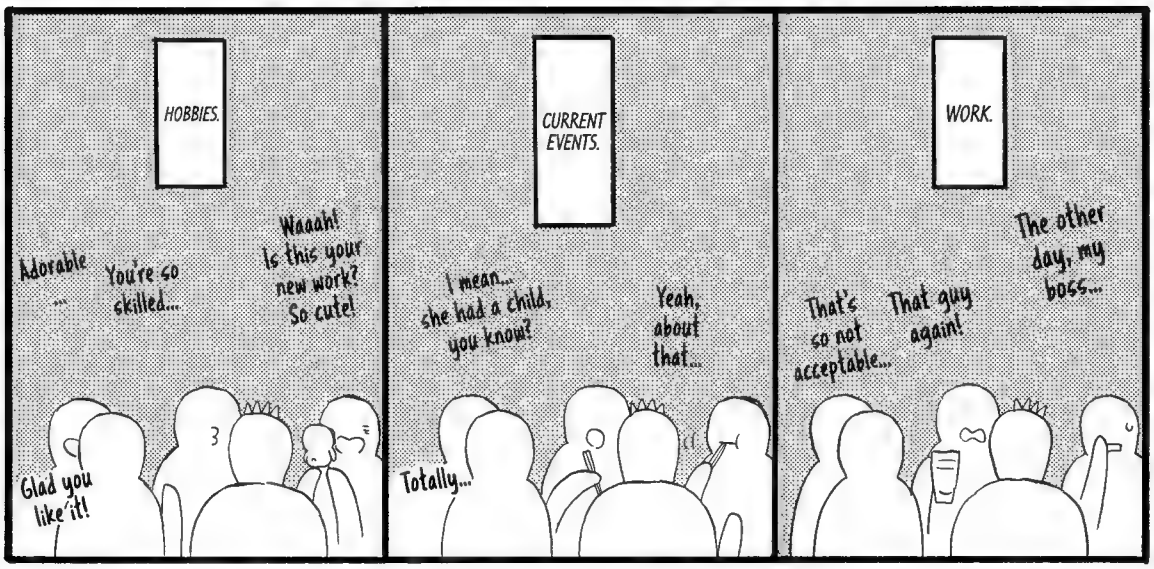
...
Totally!
You found a great guy!
Heh heh heh...


I CAN FOCUS ON MY WORK WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.
I CONSIDERED HIRING A HOUSEKEEPER. BUT NOW THAT I HAVE KIRISHIMA-KUN...
IT SURE IS.
AND HAVING SOMEONE LOOK AFTER THE HOUSE MUST BE VERY HELPFUL.

THE ATMOSPHERE WOULD, AT THE VERY LEAST, BE A BIT NEGATIVE. BUT...
So you're basically a leech!
Whaat...? A NEET...?
I THOUGHT THAT IF I TOLD THEM THAT I'M A HOUSEHUSBAND...
I DON'T GET THAT VIBE FROM THESE PEOPLE AT ALL...
UGHH ...

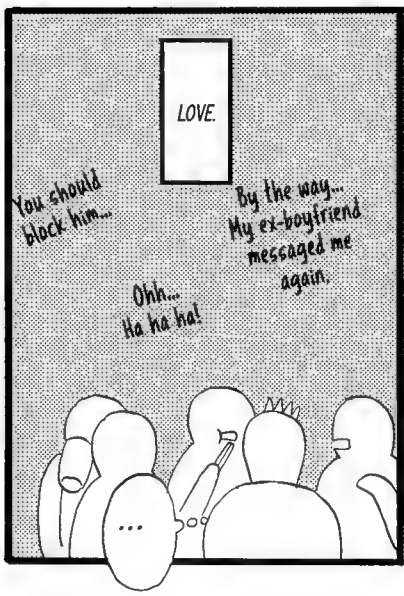

Whoa! Now I'm curious!
Well, this time it was on a whole new level.

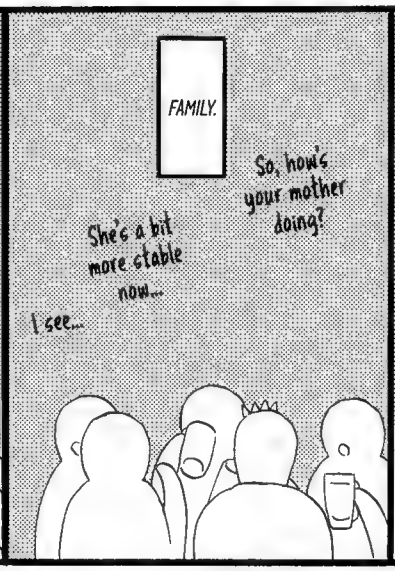

OH!
REMEMBER THAT COLLEAGUE I TALKED ABOUT BEFORE? THE ONE WHO'S A COMPULSIVE LIAR?
OH, RIGHT. HEAR ME OUT!
YEAH! DID THEY COME UP WITH A NEW LIE?


HOBBIES.
Adorable...
You're so skilled...
Waaah! Is this your new work? So cute!
Glad you like it!

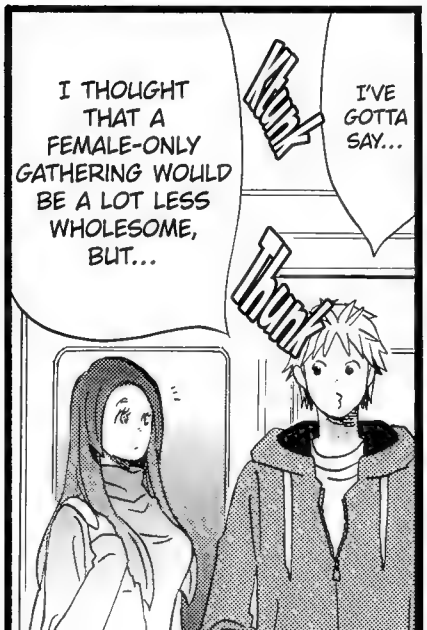
CURRENT EVENTS.
I mean... she had a child, you know?
Yeah, about that...
Totally...

WORK.
The other day, my boss...
That's so not acceptable...
That guy again!


LOVE.
You should block him...
By the way... My ex-boyfriend messaged me again.
Ohh... Ha ha ha!
...

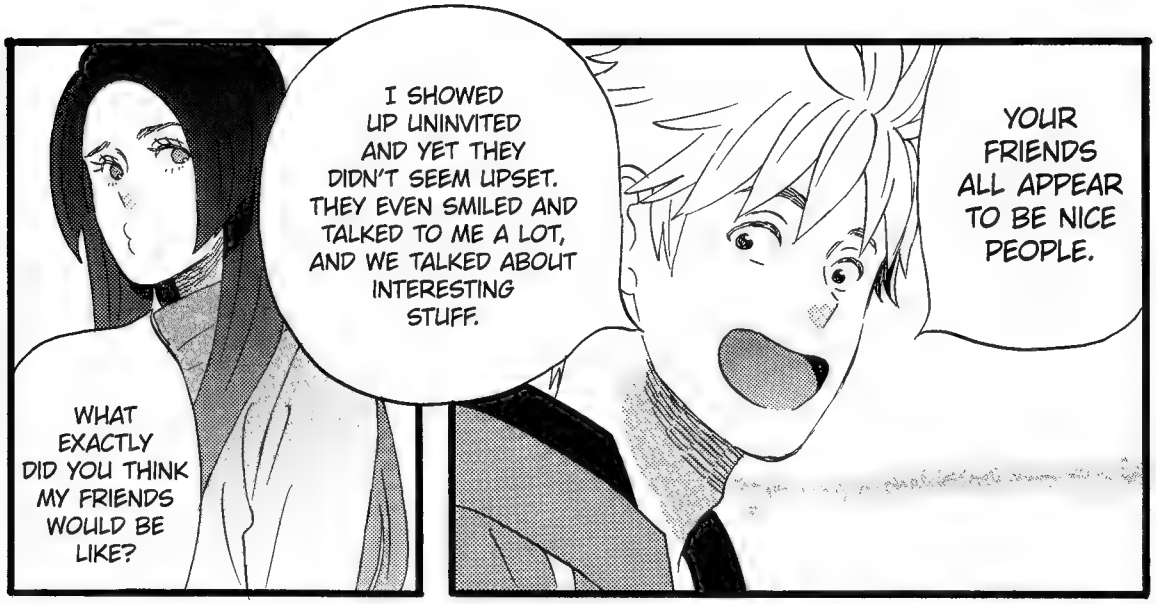

FAMILY.
So, how's your mother doing?
She's a bit more stable now...
I see...

PETS.
Huh? Don't tell me he got fatter again...
I don't know what to do with my cat...
Really?!
He did. I have a photo...

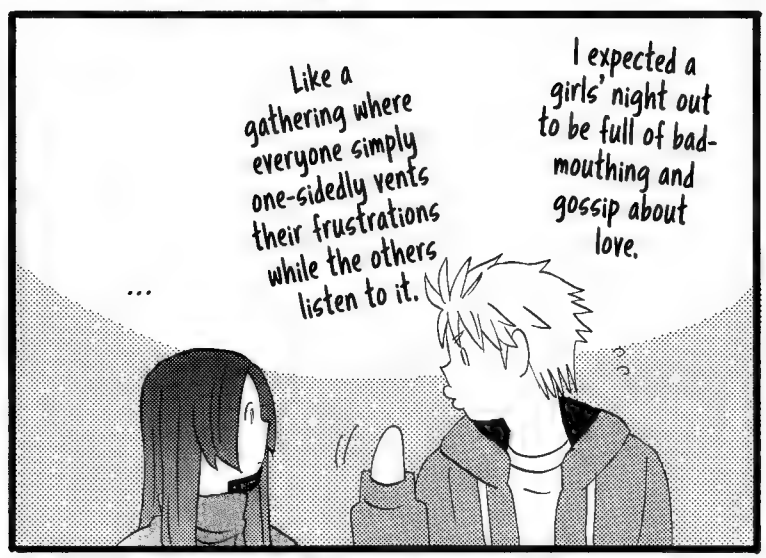

I THOUGHT THAT A FEMALE-ONLY GATHERING WOULD BE A LOT LESS WHOLESOME, BUT...
Hunh
I'VE GOTTA SAY...
Thunk

Pshhh...

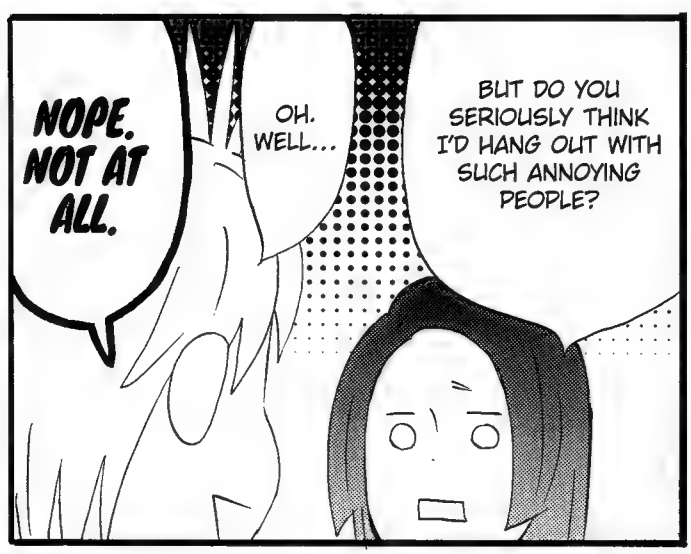
WELL THEN, SEE YOU AROUND!
SEE YOU!

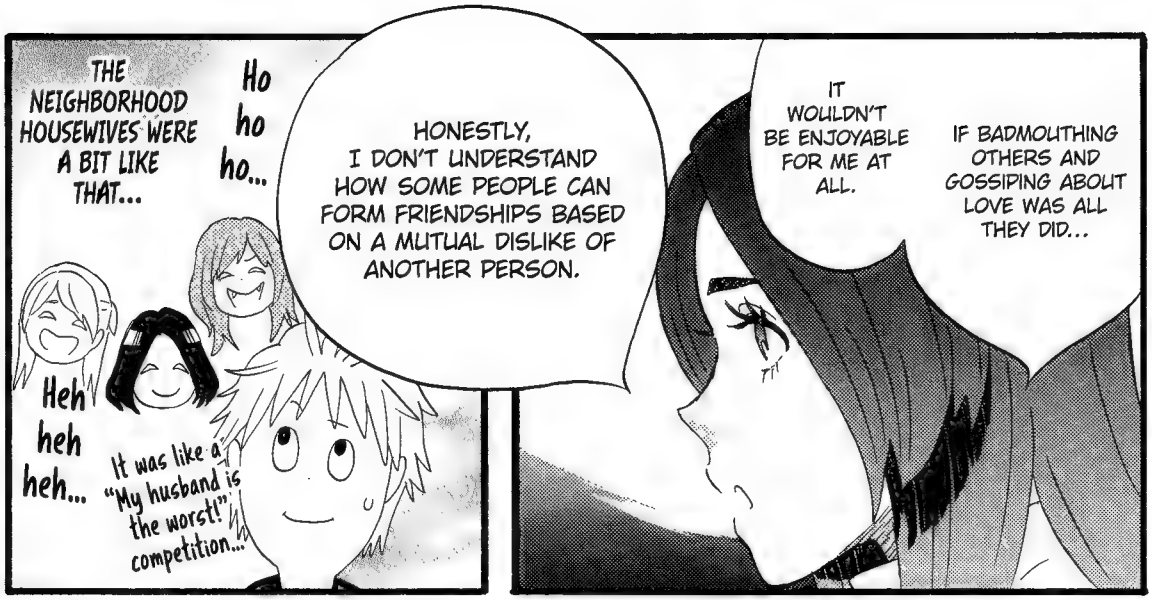

I SHOWED UP UNINVITED AND YET THEY DIDN'T SEEM UPSET. THEY EVEN SMILED AND TALKED TO ME A LOT, AND WE TALKED ABOUT INTERESTING STUFF.
YOUR FRIENDS ALL APPEAR TO BE NICE PEOPLE.
WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU THINK MY FRIENDS WOULD BE LIKE?

WELL, I GUESS SOME PEOPLE DO THAT.
...


I expected a girls' night out to be full of bad-mouthing and gossip about love.
Like a gathering where everyone simply one-sidedly vents their frustrations while the others listen to it.
...

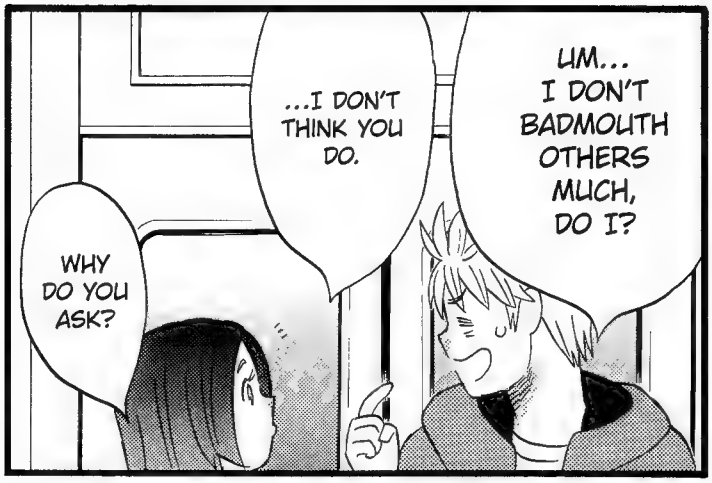
A FRIEND SHOULD OBVIOUSLY BE SOMEONE YOU ENJOY SPENDING TIME WITH.


BUT DO YOU SERIOUSLY THINK I'D HANG OUT WITH SUCH ANNOYING PEOPLE?
OH. WELL...
NOPE. NOT AT ALL.

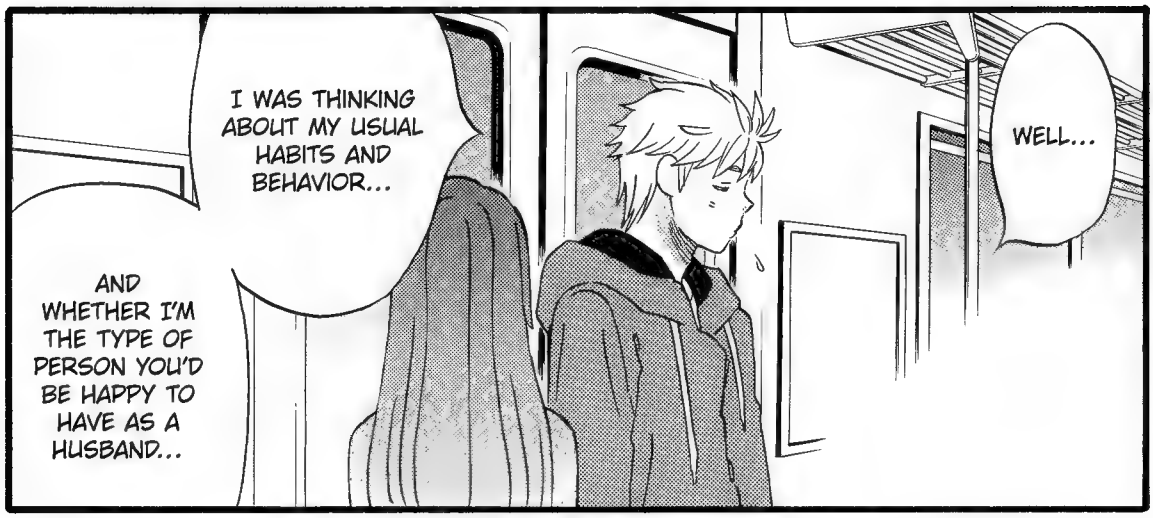

THE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSEWIVES WERE A BIT LIKE THAT...
Ho ho ho...
Heh heh heh...
It was like a "My husband is the worst!" competition...
HONESTLY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW SOME PEOPLE CAN FORM FRIENDSHIPS BASED ON A MUTUAL DISLIKE OF ANOTHER PERSON.
IT WOULDN'T BE ENJOYABLE FOR ME AT ALL.
IF BADMOUTHING OTHERS AND GOSSIPING ABOUT LOVE WAS ALL THEY DID...

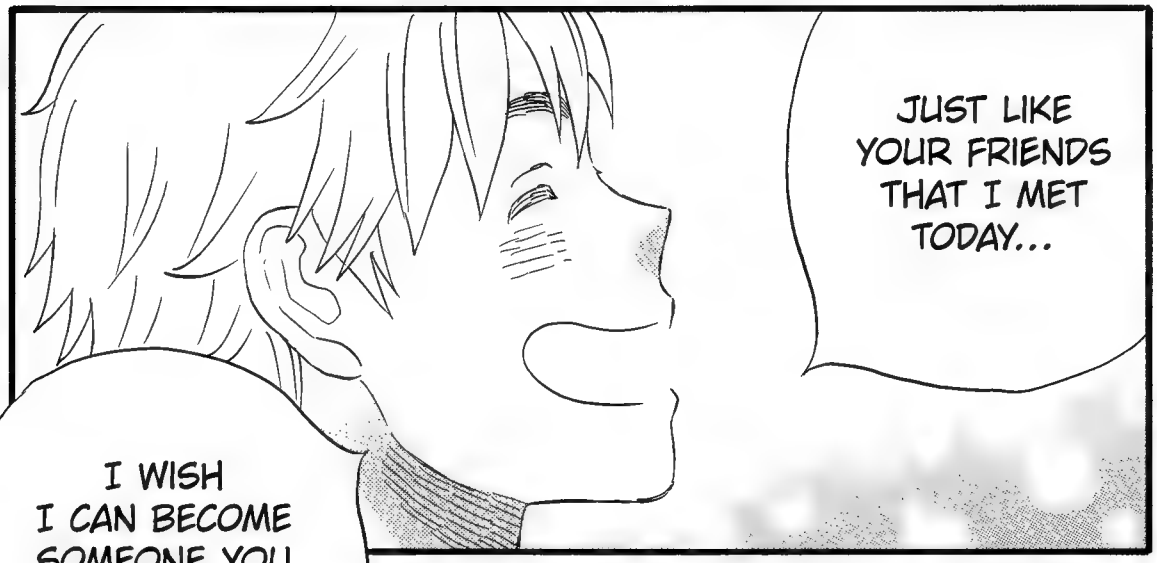
ISHIMURA-SAN IS CERTAINLY UNCONVENTIONAL, BUT I FEEL LIKE SHE LIKES AND ATTRACTS GOOD PEOPLE.

IT'S... CURIOUS.


WHY DO YOU ASK?
...I DON'T THINK YOU DO.
UM... I DON'T BADMOUTH OTHERS MUCH, DO I?

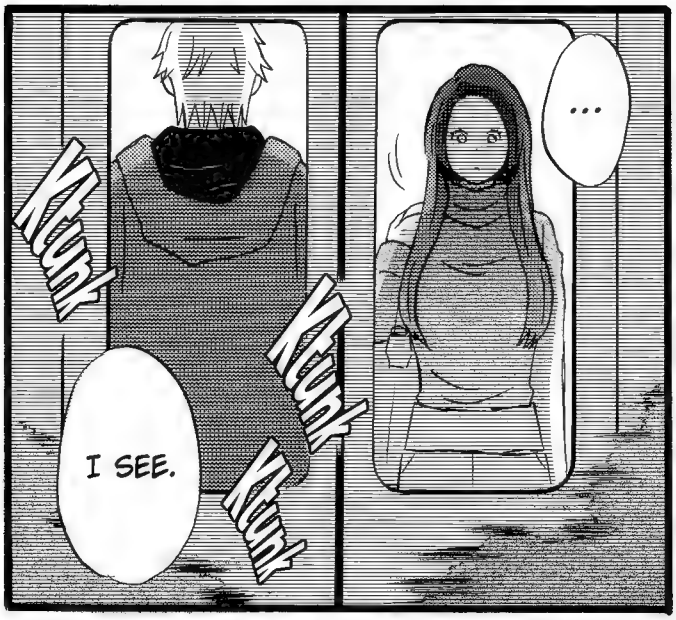
Good people, huh...?
...

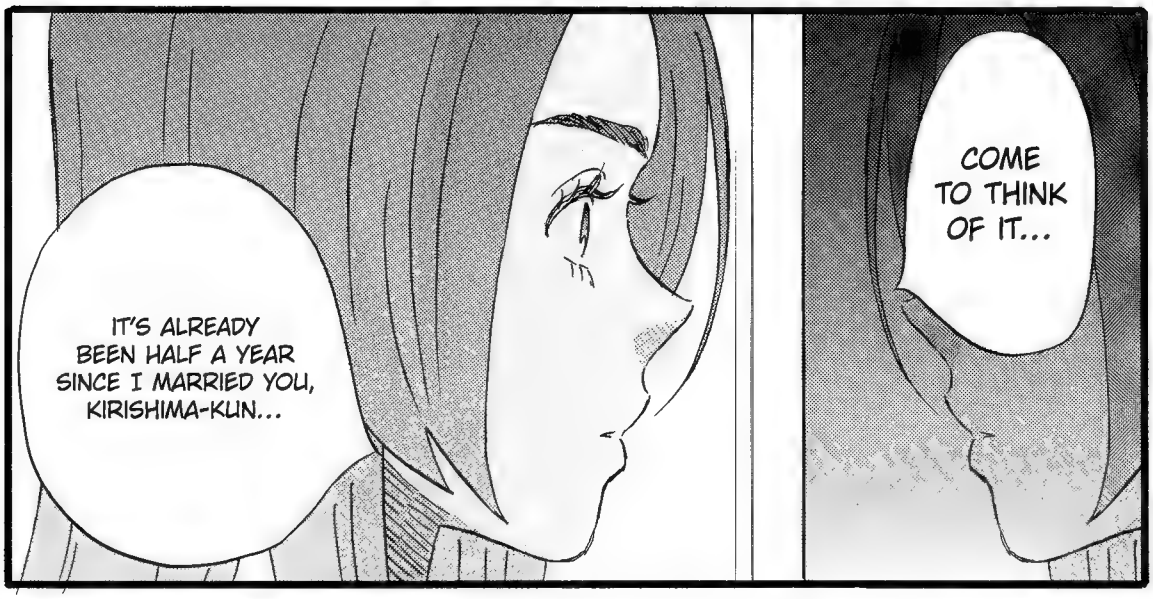

I WAS THINKING ABOUT MY USUAL HABITS AND BEHAVIOR...
WELL...
AND WHETHER I'M THE TYPE OF PERSON YOU'D BE HAPPY TO HAVE AS A HUSBAND...

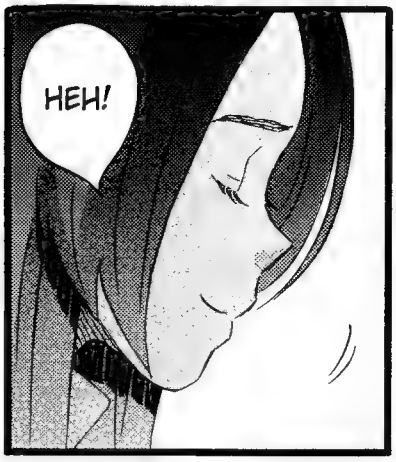

JUST LIKE YOUR FRIENDS THAT I MET TODAY...

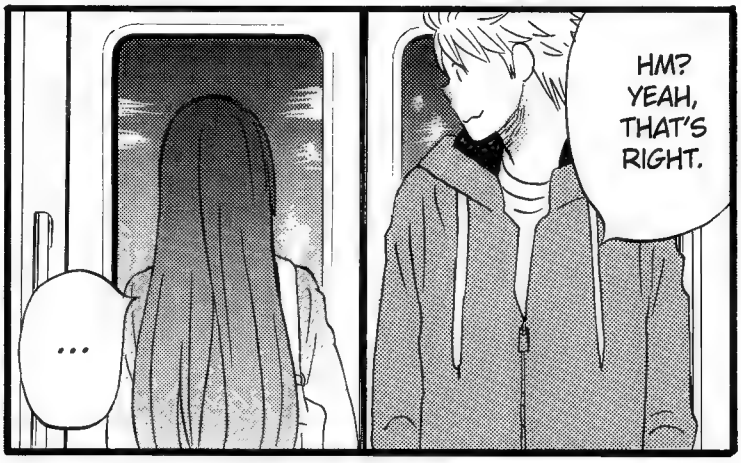
I WISH I CAN BECOME SOMEONE YOU ENJOY BEING WITH...
...

Kunk
Kunk

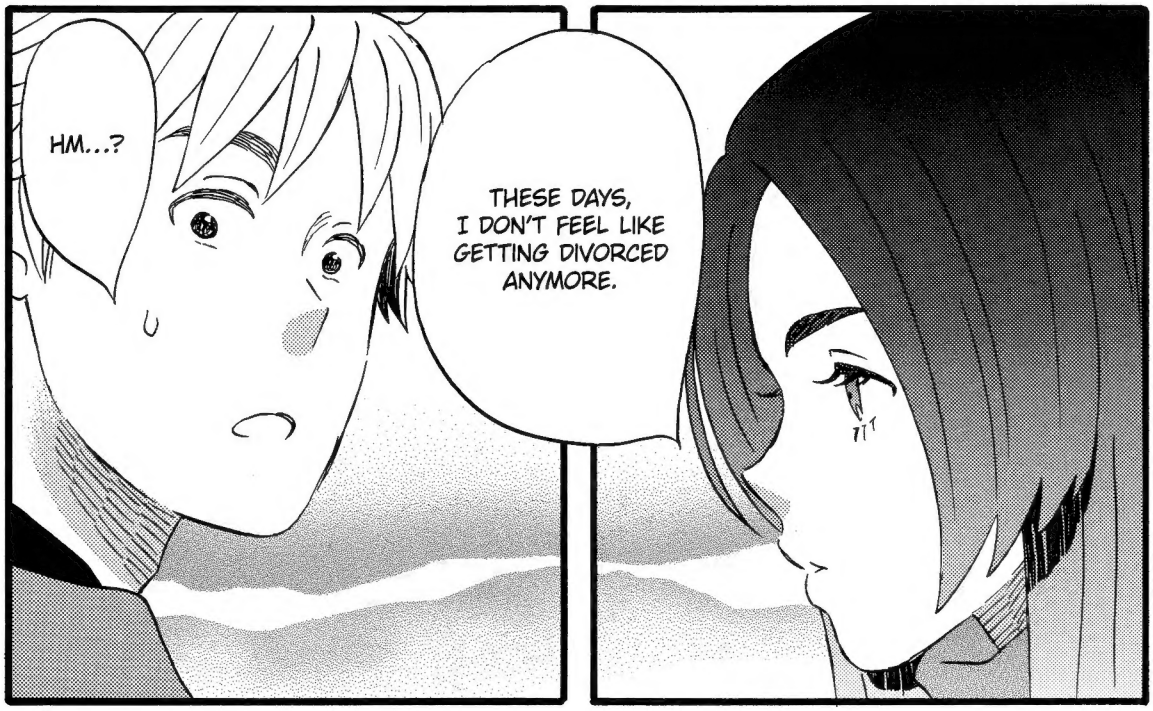

Kunk
Kunk
Kunk
I SEE.
...

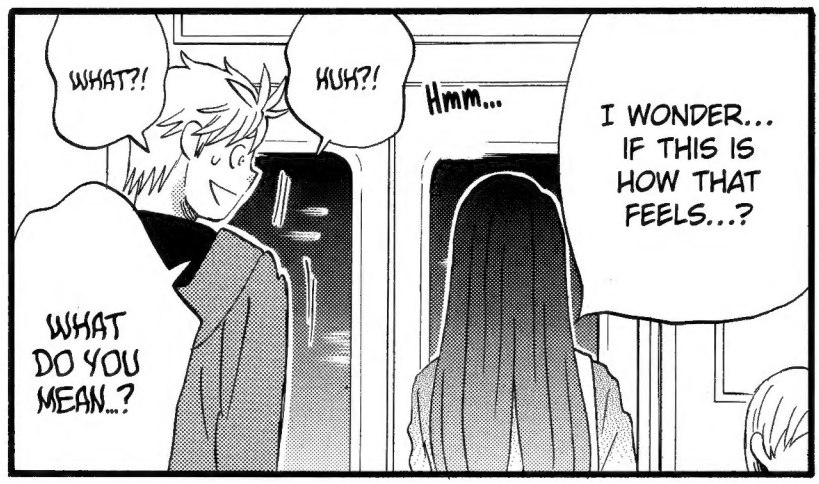

IT'S ALREADY BEEN HALF A YEAR SINCE I MARRIED YOU, KIRISHIMA-KUN...
COME TO THINK OF IT...

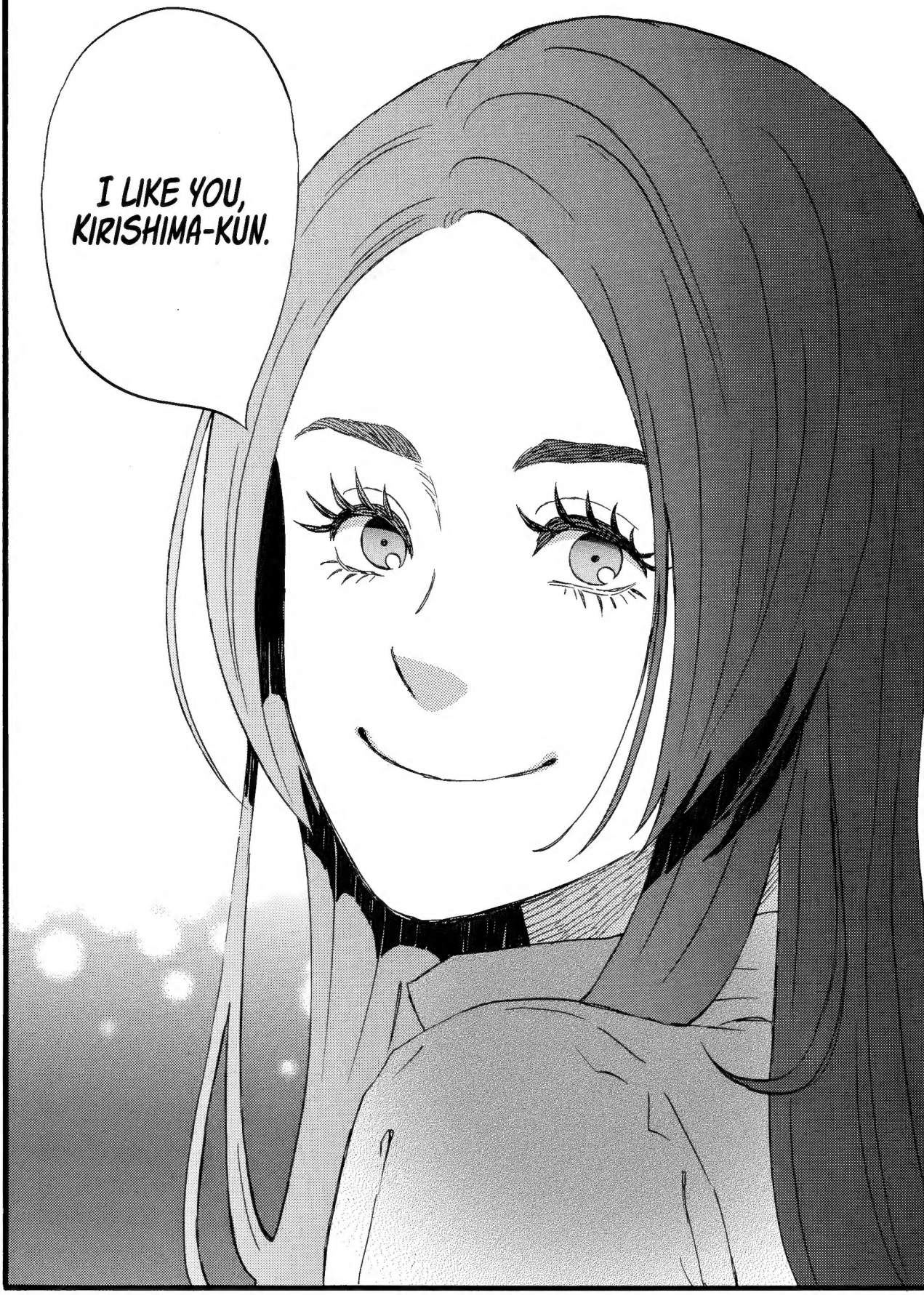

HEH!

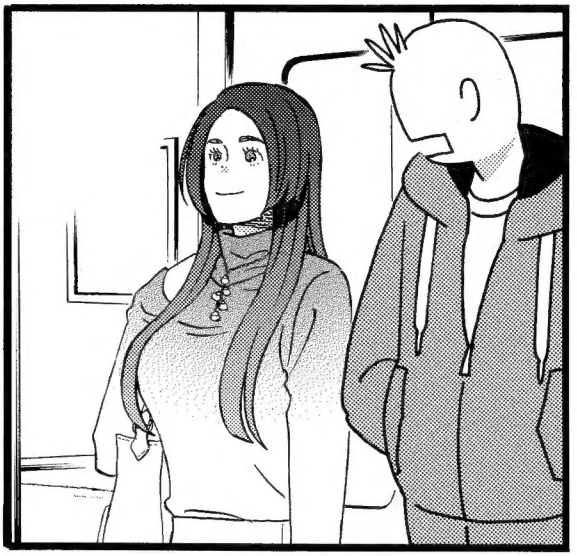

...
HM? YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.

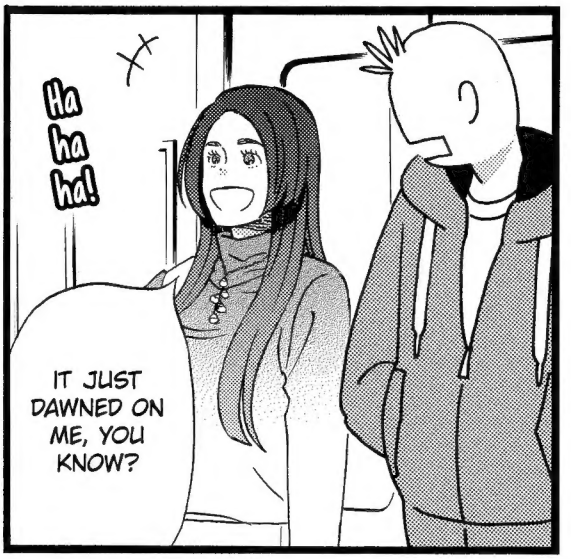
Ktunk
Ktunk
Ktunk
I COULD LIVE WITH SOMEONE OF THE OPPOSITE SEX FOR THIS LONG.
HEH HEH HEH!
ASIDE FROM MY FATHER, I NEVER IMAGINED...
HUH...?



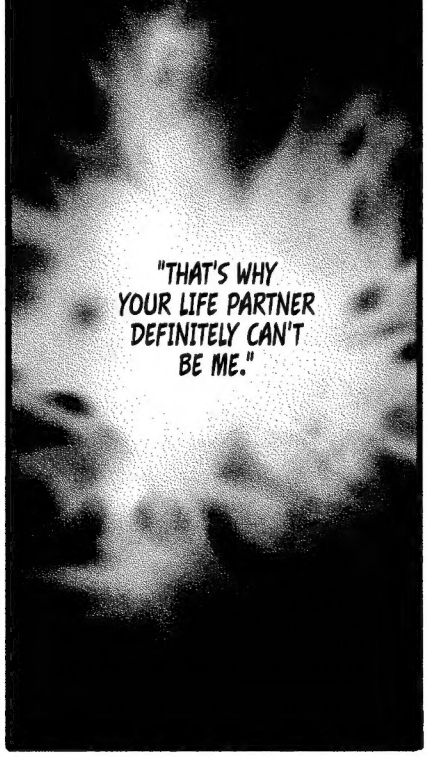



I LIKE YOU, KIRISHIMA-KUN.

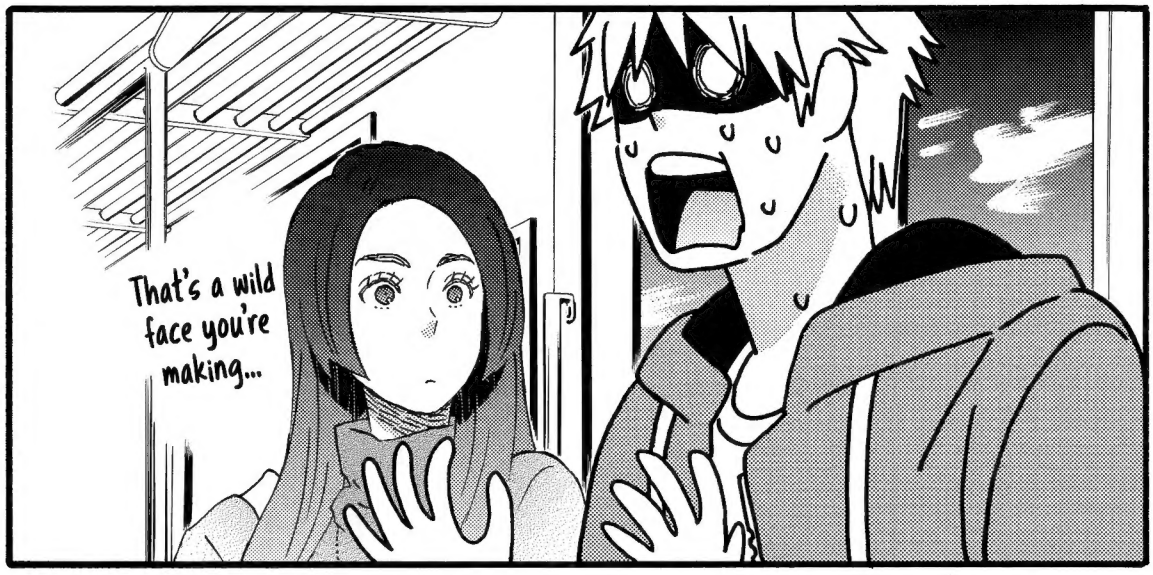



Ha ha ha!
IT JUST DAWNED ON ME, YOU KNOW?

IT-
Huuuh?!
IT DAWNED ON YOU...?
ISN'T THIS WAY TOO QUICK...?!
YOU THINK?


"THAT'S WHY YOUR LIFE PARTNER DEFINITELY CAN'T BE ME."

WELL, I MEAN...
Ah...!


That's a wild face you're making...

IN THE NEXT CHAPTER... DIVORCE?!
WE NEED TO START WITH BEING FRIENDS FIRST!
HUH?
HOLD YOUR HORSES!
IT'S TOO EARLY!